

Outrage and action

Mad yet? You aren't? Outraged instead?

No?

Well, you should be.

As the bumper sticker says, "If you aren't outraged, you aren't paying attention."

Now that would not be you or any of us, would it? We are all paying attention, aren't we?

For sure, we have come to know that there really are yahoos out there who don't like us much...who don't like government programs and services...who don't like public education.

'These unfriendlies are at best libertarians, at worst anarchists.'

And we know these yahoos really do intend to do us harm.

These malcontents have names like Joe Balyeat, Ed and Trevis Butcher, and Scott Mendenhall.

Joe, Ed, and Scott serve in our state legislature. Ed and Scott are up for reelection.

Trevis runs ballot issue campaigns out of a post office box in Winifred.

These unfriendlies are at best libertarians, at worst anarchists.

They care not one whit for the work we do, for whom, and why.

They reject social compact. They are social Darwinists.

Fraud and deception

This year they have come together to promote three nasty ballot issues, including two that would dramatically distort our state's constitution. (See pages 1, 8, and 9.)

They have formed a shell organization deceptively labeled Montanans in Action. MIA receives and launders thousands of out-of-state dollars to promote their ballot issues. Much if not all of their money comes from multimillionaire New York City real estate developer Howard Rich.

But Trevis Butcher refuses to admit the source of his funding. He refuses to identify the mem-

bers of Montanans in Action—if in fact there are any members other than himself.

This past spring, Montanans in Action employed a small army of out-of-state mercenaries to collect signatures. They spent over \$600,000 collecting signatures. Unfortunately for them a Great Falls judge agreed with us that their mercenary signature gatherers committed fraud and deception. They have appealed the judge's decision to our state Supreme Court.

Another judge in Helena agreed with us that one of their ballot issues, CI-97—the one that would arbitrarily and capriciously cap state expenditures—is itself a fraudulent and deceitful piece of work, that it hides more than one amendment to our constitution, that it is in fact unconstitutional. This, too, is on appeal.

Taking action

But we are not only outraged, we have taken action.

We helped form a robust organization of citizens and organizations determined to defeat CI-97. We named our group, appropriately enough, Not in Montana. (See www.notinmontana.org.)

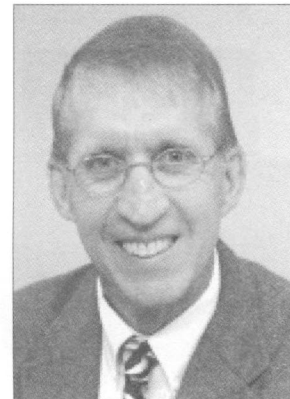
We are working with other groups to oppose CI-98 and I-154.

We do this because we can.

We can because we are one big union of dues-paying members living and working everywhere in Montana. We can and we must make a difference. It is our duty, our primary self-interest and expectation to protect and promote those public institutions, programs, and services that benefit all our citizens.

My thanks and regards to you and every one of our members who have empowered us to do what must be done. ■

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BY ERIC FEAYER
MEA-MFT PRESIDENT